

BRACKNELL GO OUT SO BRAVELY

WYCOMBE WANDERERS 1
BRACKNELL 0

A SOLITARY goal by England international Larry Pritchard in the 20th minute of this semi-final replay in the B & E's Sunday cup put the Isthmians into the final against either Wokingham or Slough.

But all the real honours went to a battling Bracknell side which fought bravely all the way to the final whistle and, at the end, had lost only by a 3-2 aggregate after two hundred and ten minutes.

Though Wycombe keeper Peter Spittle did not have one direct shot to deal with in the entire game the Wycombe display was disappointing and the fair Wycombe crowd were not slow to show their approval at Bracknell's determined display.

They had expected their team to really crack the Spartan visitors but, as the game wore on, realised that it was going to be another close match. Manager Dan Dabbs kept the same side which had finished last week's 2-2 drawn game which meant that Terry Barnard kept his place whilst, this time, Charlie Gaffney, was named as substitute.

Wycombe had Spittle in goal for John Maxwell. Bracknell began the game kicking into the very strong cold wind and immediately found themselves forced back. Pritchard shot over the Bracknell bar in the 12th minute and Bracknell looked to be in for a real struggle. After eighteen minutes of solid pressure from Wycombe the Bracknell defence looked in fine form. Spittle, in the home goal had only handled the ball once, when centre-half Delaney passed the ball to him.

When Spittle cleared his own goal-keeper it went three-quarters the way down the pitch whilst the constantly in action John Alder was lucky to get near to the half-way line against the wind.

But, after twenty minutes the nail was well and truly hammered into Bracknell's coffin with a fine goal — and it had to be a fine goal to beat the superbly in-form, Alder. Birdseye began the move on the half-way line when he crossed for Amos to let the ball run through his legs to the waiting Pritchard who stepped at before thumping it past Alder from ten yards.

Now Wycombe really began to force the pace. A quick free-kick by Williams after Dewick had fouled, sent Amos clear away, but the Wycombe forward shot badly wide with Alder at his mercy.

Bracknell's only reply came on the half-hour when Woodcock sent Barnard away, but the young Bracknell forward was not quick enough to get the ball into the middle. Again Wycombe should have added to their score when Delaney, who with full back Gambin plays for England next week, headed the ball forward into the Bracknell penalty area. For once Donachie could not stretch those vital inches try as he did and the ball eluded him to go to Amos who, much to the crowd's anger, missed badly again.

But, at half-time, against the wind, Bracknell had done another fine job. They had been lucky in defence at times, but again MacPhee, Hopkins and Donachie had played superbly in front of a superb Alder. But, all the Bracknell players had done a fine defensive job and, as often as not, centre-forward John Squires had come back into the thick of it.

Bracknell immediately looked better after the break. As soon as Alder received the ball he sent it three-quarters the way down the pitch and Bracknell were at last attacking, but Bracknell could only get a few players untied and they still did not threaten danger.

In the 50th minute Spittle at last received his first Bracknell shot when Barnard's intended centre found its way to

him. In the 62nd minute Donachie was clearly pushed off the ball in the centre of the field and, much to his annoyance, Pritchard "scored" after the ball had been handled by a Wycombe player. Referee Balein did not see Donachie's obstruction nor the handling offence and signalled a goal, but the entire Bracknell team asked him to go to the linesman and, as a result, the goal was disallowed, and rightly so.

Wycombe manager Brian Lee, sensing that Bracknell were now coming back into the game brought off Horseman for Hutchinson. Alder then dived superbly to hold a clever flick by Pritchard who was the hub of almost every Wycombe attack.

Occasionally Bracknell broke away into attack but they never really looked capable of breaking Delaney and company whilst at the other end Bracknell's defence looked more solid than ever when supported by the wind.

Colin Hopkins stupidly kicked the ball away to get himself a deserved booking in the 73rd minute and then Elderfield and Alder nearly got themselves into a tangle, but Alder dived on the ball to retrieve the situation.

With time running out the spectators almost had another slice of last-minute drama. Bracknell attacked and won a free-kick. Wycombe's Gane kicked the ball away and got himself booked. Barnard then crossed the ball from the left. Keeper Spittle went to collect, but full-back Gambin intercepted and turned and passed back to Spittle who wasn't there! The ball got to within two yards of the goal line but that was the nearest the ever-ailing Newtowners came to scoring in another hard battle.

Full marks again to the eleven Bracknell players who had given the famous Isthmians another match to remember.

Bracknell: Alder; Elderfield, Donachie, MacPhee, Hopkins, Jeffries, Woodcock, Dewick; Squires, Wilkinson, Barnard.



A good example of the packed defence Bracknell used to such good effect at Wycombe on Saturday. Here, Jimmy Woodcock blasts the ball away, his colleagues looking on with approval.

